CHAPTER 4
ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

This chapter analyzes the cumulative environmental impacts of the resource management alternatives presented in Chapter 2.

The Alternatives are descriptions of management emphasis and are designed to guide future decision-making in the PRA; they do not propose specific, on-the-ground projects or actions. Therefore, environmental consequences of the Alternatives can be described only in comparative, general terms. In most cases, more detailed or site-specific analysis will be required to implement decisions that are made in this plan. Future analysis will comply with the National Environmental Policy Act's implementing regulations.

At the end of Chapter 2 is a Comparative Impact Summary (Table 2.5).

The relationship of short-term use of the environment to the long-term productivity of the resources and the potentially irreversible or irretrievable commitments of resources are described at the end of this chapter.

There appears to be no significant impacts on Fire Management for any of the Alternatives. For that reason, Fire Management is not discussed further in this chapter.

ASSUMPTIONS

In order to perform this analysis, certain assumptions had to be made. Nothing in these assumptions should be interpreted as constraining or redefining the management practices proposed for each Alternative as described in Chapter 2. The assumptions were developed for impact analysis purposes only and are described below.

The impact analysis of the minerals program is based on the following assumptions:

1. Phosphate mining and production will continue at or near the present rate.

2. Any significant oil and gas discovery will require an additional environmental document.

3. Public land with known or potential mineral values would not be sold.

4. Land exchanges would require the retention of valuable mineral estate or the exchange of mineral estates having equal value.

5. Environmental Assessments will be completed for all major mineral developments and projects.

The impact analysis of public land disposals would be based on the following assumptions:

1. All the public land listed under the disposal category will be transferred out of Federal ownership through sale, exchange, or the Recreation and Public Purposes Act (R&PP) process.

2. After the public land is sold and/or exchanged, the use of the land will change.

3. Refer to Part I of this document for standard operating procedures for public land disposal.

The analysis does not consider that inventories of each parcel may reveal conflicts or resource values warranting protection, thus removing the parcels from the disposal category. It also does not consider that land exchanges would be an objective and that many of the disposal parcels would be exchanged for lands possessing equal or greater public values (wildlife habitat or improved range management).

The impact analysis to riparian and water quality is based on the following assumption:

All calculations are based on only those 97.44 miles of stream inventoried.

ALTERNATIVE A

Minerals Management

This Alternative represents the existing Minerals Management Program. It highlights the majority of the management initiatives related to minerals exploration, assessment, and development.

Solid Leasable Minerals

The lands open for solid mineral leasing total 604,064 acres, or 94 percent of the total acres administered for solid leasable minerals (see Table 4.1). A total of 20,195 acres (3 percent) have a high potential for leasing and are classified as Known Phosphate Leasing Areas, while 124,630 acres (21 percent) have a low potential and 459,239 acres (76 percent) have no potential. A total of 17,372 acres, or about 86 percent, of the high potential lands are presently under lease.

The lands closed to solid mineral leasing for the protection of wildlife refuges, Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs), recreation sites, watershed, and cultural resources total 38,895 acres, or 6 percent of the total acres administered. Included 28,381 acres of non-discretionary land withdrawals and 10,514 acres of discretionary land withdrawals (See Table 4.1). Of the total 38,895 acres closed to leasing, 5,280 acres, or 14 percent, have a low potential for phosphate leasing and the remainder have no potential. The land closures would not significantly affect the availability of lands for solid leasable mineral exploration and development. Less than 3 percent of the lands open to solid mineral leasing are currently under lease.

At present, two active phosphate mining operations in the area involve BLM-administered mineral estate lands (not including U.S. Forest Service lands). The lands involved include 80 acres of public land and 1,363 acres of split-estate (private surface/Federal minerals). According to the approved mine plans and present production rates, the two active operations will be mined out during the early 1990s and other leases will be developed. The new mining operations would produce throughout the life of the RMP and involve 320 acres of split estate, but no public land. Phosphate ore production from lands administered by BLM (not including U.S. Forest Service lands) during the life of this RMP would total about 4.5 million tons. This represents a commitment of resources, but is not significant when compared to the total leased phosphate resource base of 554 million tons.

Two inactive mining operations in the area, Wooley Valley (Unit I Mine) and the Woodall Mountain Mine, involve 531 acres of public land and 160 acres of split estate. The properties for all practical purposes are mined out, but not abandoned.

Several proposed mine plans are on file with the BLM, but have not been approved. It is possible, but not probable, that one or more of the proposed mines could be activated during the life of this RMP. The proposed plans involve 160 acres of public land and 1,624 acres of split estate.

Primarily the impacts from phosphate mining, prospecting, and exploration will be minimal and short-term due to existing mitigating measures, State and Federal regulations, and site-specific environmental requirements. The long-term impacts from mining would be changes in topography (pits not backfilled, waste dumps, and roads). The long term impacts from exploration would also occur but on a smaller scale (roads and drill pads).

Fluid Leasable Minerals

Oil and Gas

Oil and gas leasing, exploration, and drilling activities are the most directly affected minerals activities. Restrictions placed on access, exploration methods, and seasonal uses have a significant affect on mineral availability.

TABLE 4.1
MINERAL POTENTIAL/AVAILABILITY
(Federal Mineral Estate Excluding National Forest System Lands)

Management Status	Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D	Alternative E
Non-Energy Solid Leasable Minerals (Mineral potential is for phosphate.)					
1/ Acres Administered	642,959	642,959	642,959	642,959	642,959
1. Acres Closed	38,895	44,378	38,895	44,378	28,381
Non-Discretionary	28,381	28,381	28,381	28,381	28,381
Low Potential	5,280	5,280	5,280	5,280	5,280
High Potential	0	0	0	0	0
No Potential	23,101	23,101	2/ 23,101	23,101	23,101
Discretionary	2/ 10,514	3/ 15,997	10,514	3/ 15,997	0
Low Potential	0	4/ 453	0	4/ 453	0
High Potential	0	0	0	0	0
No Potential	10,514	15,544	10,514	15,544	0
2. Acres Open	604,064	598,581	604,064	598,581	614,578
Low Potential	124,630	124,630	124,630	124,630	124,630
High Potential	20,195	19,742	20,195	19,742	20,195
No Potential	459,239	454,209	459,239	454,209	469,753
Fluid Leasable Minerals Oil and Gas/Geothermal (Mineral potential is for oil and gas.) (Geothermal is all low potential.)					
1/ Acres Administered					
Oil & Gas	393,403	393,403	393,403	393,403	393,403
Geothermal	387,461	387,461	387,461	387,461	387,461
1. Acres Closed to Leasing	38,895	38,895	31,895	38,895	31,895
Non-Discretionary	28,381	28,381	28,381	28,381	28,381
Low Potential	0	0	0	0	0
Moderate Potential	11,298	11,298	11,298	11,298	11,298
High Potential	17,083	17,083	17,083	17,083	17,083
Discretionary	2/ 10,514	10,514	3,514	10,514	3,514
Low Potential	0	0	0	0	0
Moderate Potential	0	0	0	0	0
High Potential	10,514	10,514	3,514	10,514	3,514

TABLE 4.1 (cont.)
MINERAL POTENTIAL/AVAILABILITY
(Federal Mineral Estate Excluding National Forest System Lands)

Management Status	Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D	Alternative E
2. Acres Open to Leasing	354,508	354,508	361,508	354,508	361,508
No Surface Occupancy	24,821	30,499	28,921	40,709	28,921
Low Potential	6,101	6,636	6,101	6,855	6,101
Moderate Potential	1,130	3,000	1,130	9,191	1,130
High Potential	17,590	20,863	21,690	24,663	21,690
5/ Acres Open with Seasonal & Standard Stipulations	329,687	324,009	332,587	313,799	332,587
Low Potential	121,355	120,799	121,355	120,580	121,355
Moderate Potential	73,923	72,053	73,923	66,253	73,923
High Potential	134,409	131,157	137,309	126,966	137,309
Locatable Minerals					
1/ Acres Administered	387,461	387,461	387,461	387,461	387,461
1. Acres Closed to Entry	57,211	57,211	57,211	58,188	57,211
Congressional	0	0	0	0	0
Executive Branch	51,015	51,015	51,015	51,015	51,015
BLM	6,196	6,196	6,196	7,173	6,196
Low Potential	914	914	914	1,014	914
Moderate Potential	594	594	594	971	594
High Potential	4,688	4,688	4,688	5,188	4,688
2. Acres Open to Entry	330,250	330,250	330,250	329,273	330,250
Low Potential	65,355	65,355	65,355	65,255	65,355
Moderate Poten.	196,400	196,400	196,400	196,023	196,400
High Potential	68,495	68,495	68,495	67,995	68,495

TABLE 4.1 (cont.)
MINERAL POTENTIAL/AVAILABILITY
(Federal Mineral Estate Excluding National Forest System Lands)

Management Status	Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D	Alternative E
		Minerals Materials			
1/ Acres Administered	387,461	387,461	387,461	387,461	387,461
1. Acres Closed to Disposal	68,604	75,668	73,673	85,878	73,673
Non-Discretionary	66,155	66,155	66,155	66,155	66,155
Low Potential	56,155	56,155	56,155	56,155	56,155
High Potential	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000
Discretionary	2,449	9,513	7,518	19,723	7,518
Low Potential	2,449	7,213	5,818	14,523	5,818
High Potential	0	2,300	1,700	5,200	1,700
2. Acres Open to Disposal	318,857	311,793	313,788	301,583	313,788
Low Potential	288,573	283,809	285,204	276,499	285,204
High Potential	30,000	27,700	28,300	24,800	28,300

1/ The total mineral estate administered by BLM in the PRA is 648,901, excluding National Forest System lands and BIA-administered reservation lands. The estate administered includes 255,498 acres of State and private land where only phosphate was reserved, and 5,942 acres of State and private land where only oil and gas were reserved.
2/ Grays Lake critical habitat area (9600), plus Fawn Mountain State Park (914)
3/ Total figure includes areas listed under note #2, and Research Natural Area (RNA) (977), plus Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) (2706), plus Downey Public Water Reserve (1800)
4/ Travertine Park (253), Stump Creek (200)
5/ 130,000 Acres will have seasonal restrictions under each Alternative

The lands open for oil and gas leasing total 354,508 acres, or 90 percent of the total land administered for oil and gas (Table 4.1). There are 28,381 acres, or 7 percent, with non-discretionary closures to leasing which have a moderate to high potential for oil and gas. In addition, there are 10,514 acres, or 3 percent, with discretionary closures which have a high potential for oil and gas (Appendices: Map 2, Alternative A, and Map 10).

No Surface Occupancy (NSO) stipulations would restrict oil and gas activities to provide protection for recreation, watershed, and cultural resource values on 24,821 acres. These stipulations apply to 17,590 acres with high potential and 1,130 acres with moderate potential. The Blackfoot Reservoir area consists of approximately 15,880 acres of moderate to high potential. This area would be most strongly impacted if oil and gas are discovered because approximately 12,000 acres could not be reached by directional drilling. Power projects and reserves, R&PP patents and leases, public water reserves, and cultural sites make up the remaining NSO areas.

Geothermal

The lands open to geothermal leasing total 348,566 acres, or 90 percent of the total lands administered for its geothermal resource (Table 4.1). There are 28,381 acres, or 7 percent, with non-discretionary closures to leasing. In addition, there are 10,514 acres, or 3 percent, with and discretionary closures. NSO stipulations apply to the same acres that are listed for oil and gas (Table 4.1). Because geothermal potential is considered to be low in all of the PRA, adverse impacts due to the above restrictions is considered insignificant.

Locatable Minerals

The lands open to mining claim location total 330,250 acres, 85 percent of the total lands administered for locatable minerals (Table 4.1). Approximately 15 percent of the PRA is closed to locatable mineral exploration and development to protect cultural resources, wildlife refuges, the Fort Hall Irrigation Project, developed recreation sites, and watershed. There are no Congressional closures affecting location. Executive branch closures total 51,015 acres, or 13 percent. In addition, there are 6,196 acres, or 2 percent, with BLM closures. The BLM closures include 4,688 acres, or 1 percent, with high potential and 594 acres, less than .2 percent, with moderate potential for locatable minerals (Appendices: Map 2, Alternative A, and Map 11).

The BLM closures with high potential include the following areas:

1. Indian Rocks State Park (2,888 acres). The Park is located within the eastern boundary of the Fort Hall Mining District. Geologic indicators such as anomalies, mines, prospects, and deposits are present. Possible minerals are gold, copper, silver, lead, manganese, and tungsten.

2. Downey Watershed (1,800 acres). The watershed is located on the northern edge of the Swan Lake Mining District. Several geologic indicators are present. Possible minerals are gold, silver, lead, copper, cobalt, tungsten, and uranium.

The impacts on minerals availability are fairly small. Ongoing explorations in the area must continue to be evaluated.

The 43 CFR 3802 and 3809, Surface Management Regulations, give BLM authority to regulate mining and exploration for locatable minerals. Environmental assessments would be written for all plans of operation.

Mineral Materials

The lands open to mineral materials disposal total 318,857 acres, or 82 percent of the total land administered for mineral materials (Table 4.1). There are about 66,155 acres, or 17 percent of the lands within the PRA having non-discretionary closures to disposal of mineral materials to protect WSAs, cultural values, the Fort Hall Irrigation Project, developed recreation sites, and watershed. Of these acres, about 10,000 acres, or 3 percent, have high potential and 56,155 acres, or 14 percent, with low potential for minerals material. In addition, there are 2,449 acres, or 1 percent, with discretionary closures which have low potential for mineral materials (Appendicies: Map 2, Alternative A, and Map 12).

The discretionary closures all have a low potential for mineral materials. These closures include: an Idaho State University nature study area near McCammon, Idaho (594 Acres); the Downey Watershed (1,800 acres); and scattered cultural sites. None of these locations have potential for development and, therefore, have no significant impacts.

Alternative A would also include the following impacts to all minerals from other resource management activities:

1. A total of 22,229 acres would be transferred from Federal ownership by sale and exchange.

2. About 1,002 acres would be closed to mineral exploration on a seasonal basis to protect sensitive soils.

3. Approximately 130,000 acres would have seasonal restrictions to protect wildlife.

Lands

Under Alternative A, 22,229 acres would be identified for potential disposal from Federal ownership. The remainder of the public land in the PRA would be retained. The lands identified for potential disposal would have to meet

screening criteria (see Standard Operating Procedures, Part I) that eliminates the likelihood of significant adverse environmental impacts.

Disposal of the transfer areas through public sale could result in the following positive impacts:

- Decrease management costs to the BLM because sales are relatively easy to process and management efficiency would increase by eliminating isolated tracts.

- Potential for placing land in a higher use such as agricultural, commercial, or residential.

- Provide a one-time payment to the Treasury.

- Increase local property tax revenues.

- Opportunity for ranchers to block up their holdings.

- Solve existing unauthorized use.

Sales could result in the following adverse impacts:

- Reduce the potential for future land acquisition by depleting the stock of land available for future exchanges.

- Economic strains on persons currently using the land but who cannot afford to purchase it.

- Lower property values if a large scale program occurs.

The following positive impacts may occur in a land exchange program:

- Provide opportunities for acquiring public land resources, primarily wildlife and recreation.

- Improve manageability of existing public land for livestock grazing and eliminate private inholdings with potential for conflicting uses.

- Reduce management cost and improve efficiency by eliminating isolated tracts and blocking federal lands.

The major adverse impacts to an extensive land exchange program would be the cost. Exchanges are time consuming and costly to process.

Approximately 11,338 acres would be closed to right-of-way development to protect wilderness values. Another 24,821 acres would have special stipulations to protect watershed and wildlife values.

Acquisition of 994 acres of private land and an estimated 2,560 acres of State land would be proposed to support wildlife, recreation, and other resource programs.

Approximately 403 acres would be retained for the protection of recreation sites (yurts and ski areas).

Range Management

The stocking rate under this Alternative is 24,061 AUMs. This figure represents the 1980-1984 5-year average and is 17.5 percent less than the current active preference of 29,151 AUMs. The long-term stocking rate would be 24,361 AUMs. This is a 1.3 percent increase from the 5-year average stocking rate of 24,061 AUMs. This small increase reflects the AUMs available after a minimum number of range improvement projects have been installed. Under this alternative, there are 15,400 unalloted acres. Without livestock use on the 15,400 acres, it is estimated that 70 percent would remain in early (poor), mid (fair), and late (good) seral condition, while 30 percent would increase in condition from mid/late seral to potential natural community (PNC)(excellent).

A total of 22,229 acres have been identified for transfer from Federal ownership. Based on an average stocking rate of 7.28 acres/AUM, the transfer would result in a loss of 3,053 AUMs. Since the acres would no longer be under BLM administration, both short-term (3-5 years) and long-term (5+ years) environmental consequences are considered minimal to none. Table A.2 in the Appendix gives detailed information.

Under this Alternative, there would be 20 water facilities constructed, 8 miles of fencing built, and approximately 100 acres of former agricultural trespass restored to native range. The above results in an estimated positive impact of an additional 300 AUMs.

There would be no brush control/seedings under this Alternative. It is assumed that the absence of brush control and seedings will result in an increase of brush, especially in the long-term. This is a negative impact since it will reduce the amount of available AUMs.

Under this Alternative, 91.54 miles of stream would continue to be grazed by livestock. The following 3.15 miles of the 91.54 miles within "Improve" category allotments will be managed to improve fisheries and correct severe erosion problems:

	Miles	Allotment #
Horse Creek	0.6	4045
Pegram Creek	0.4	4329
Pegram Creek	0.7	4122
Green Canyon	0.5	4053
Landers Creek	0.4	4236
Wolverine Creek	0.2	4092
Eighteenmile Creek	0.35	4162
Total:	3.15	

The following 2.75 miles of the 91.54 miles would continue to deteriorate (streambank sluffing, annual removal of riparian vegetation, increase of water temperature, increase of sedimentation, increase of livestock fecal coliforms).

	Miles	Allotment #
Turner Canal	0.25	4117
Road Hollow	0.70	4305
Unnamed Tributary to Crow Creek	0.30	4269
Jones Creek	0.80	4423
Tolman Creek	0.45	4069
Eighteen Mile Creek	0.25	4190
Total:	2.75	

The remaining 87.97 miles of stream would remain in its present good to fair condition. The above can be cross-referenced to the Alternative A, Riparian Management Section in this chapter.

ORV activities would continue to have negative impacts (i.e., gates left open, fence cutting, harassment of livestock, decrease of vegetative cover, and hill/gully development that promote both on-site and off-site erosion) on livestock management throughout the PRA, especially within the following allotments:

1. Trail Creek Allotment #6098
2. Rapid Creek Allotment #6082
3. Bancroft Allotment #6032
4. Toponce Allotment #3342
5. Sheep Creek Hills Area
6. Bear Lake Plateau Area
7. Blackrock Allotment #6097

There appears to be no problems with present stocking rate for both livestock and wildlife. Wildlife programs do not affect the range program under this Alternative.

The range and forestry programs are expected to exist in harmony. The only range impact that may occur would be a positive one since the removal of timber would increase favorable grass and browse species within timber sale areas.

Approximately 10 acres would be closed to grazing to protect recreation sites. This closure would have little to no impact, less than 2 AUMs of forage would be lost.

The minerals program indicates that phosphate leases exist on 1,800.22 acres where BLM manages both surface and subsurface. The 1,800.22 acres are differentiated in the following manner:

	Acres
1. Active (where active mining exists) Henry 80	80
2. Inactive (where active mining has occurred) Stauffer 160 Woodall 370	530
3. Undeveloped leases	1190.22
	1800.22

Currently, BLM has 80 acres within the active mining designations and 530 acres in the inactive designations, unalloted for grazing. The areas within the lease areas, however, have not been actively mined. There has been no loss of vegetation or soil disturbance.

The BLM has some Taylor Grazing Act Section 15 leases scattered throughout the mineral undeveloped lease areas (1,190.22 acres). No negative impacts from mining are anticipated to the range program for both the short-term (3-5 years) or long-term (5+ years).

If portions of the present undeveloped mineral lease areas become active, the short-term impact to grazing would be negative since disturbed areas would virtually eliminate grazing. However, because of mitigating measures (seeding disturbed areas), the long-term impacts would be positive since the forage would be replaced

Impacts to Vegetation

The current ecological range condition in the PRA is .3 percent PNC, 68 percent late seral, 28 percent mid seral, 2 percent early seral, .4 percent agricultural trespass, and .3 percent rock/water. In the long-term, areas having a downward trend are expected to decline somewhat since undesirable plant species, (i.e., dyers woad, sagebrush, and other noxious weeds) would

continue to increase in density. The long-term ecological range condition is expected to be 2 percent PNC, 70 percent late seral, 26 percent mid seral. The current apparent trend is 20 percent upward, 70 percent static and 4 percent downward. In the long-term, the upward trend areas are expected to stabilize near both the static and potential natural community designations. The downward trend areas (noxious weeds, etc.) would continue to decline as undesirable vegetation increases in density. The long-term apparent trend expected would be approximately 24 percent upward, 74 percent static and 2 percent downward.

Wildlife Management

Under Alternative A, the impact of the land disposal on wildlife would be a net loss of 4,511 acres of big game winter range, 865 acres of sage grouse habitat, and 2,440 acres of sharp-tailed grouse habitat

Assuming a change in land use on the disposal areas, it would be expected that 26 fewer elk and 334 fewer deer would be wintering on public land in the PRA. Since these losses would be spread throughout the area, herd survival and viability would not be affected.

The anticipated loss of 2,985 acres of sage and sharp-tailed grouse habitat from land disposals is expected to be largely offset by improvements in ecological range condition of the remaining public land. These improvements will result from adjusted seasons of use, riparian area protection, improved livestock distribution, and restoration of disturbed areas. The net impact to the PRA's sage and sharp-tailed grouse populations is zero.

Installation of two guzzlers, conversion of four miles of fence from permanent to let-down configuration, and construction of four goose nesting platforms along the Bear River would be completed to improve distribution of wildlife. Impacts would be small increases in local populations of wildlife, which translate into insignificant impacts in terms of area-wide populations.

Adverse impacts from oil, gas, and geothermal exploration operations would be considered insignificant due to the restrictions and standard stipulations currently attached to exploration permits.

Positive impacts on wildlife from ORV closures are hard to define as they relate to kilocalories of energy saved in avoiding ORV users. It is assumed that energy saved results in increased survival, particularly during winter.

Recreation and Visual Resources

Impact Measures

Adverse and positive impacts on recreation and visual resources are defined as slight, moderate, and considerable.

Slight. These impacts are not considered significant for one or more of the following reasons:

1. No recreation opportunities, facilities, or activities would be affected.

2. Landscape changes would not significantly detract from the current situation or existing modifications have already established impacts.

3. Standard operating procedures and mitigating measures would prevent losses of recreation opportunities.

Moderate. Impacts are considered moderate for the following reasons:

1. Recreation opportunities, facilities, or activities would be changed or shifted to other areas, but not eliminated or greatly enhanced.

2. Landscape changes would be evident, but would not be visible to a large number of people. Changes would not dominate the natural landscape.

3. Standard operating procedures and mitigating measures would retain recreation uses and values.

Considerable. Impacts are considerable for the following reasons:

1. Recreation opportunities, facilities, or activities would be eliminated or greatly enhanced.

2. Landscape changes would be evident to a large number of people and dominate the viewed surroundings.

3. Standard operating procedures and mitigating measures could not retain recreation uses and values, and losses would occur.

Adoption of the current ORV designations and visual resource management classes would maintain current trends in recreation use levels and opportunities. These trends are displayed in Table 4.2 which lists visitor use day estimates for selected recreation activities in the PRA.

TABLE (4.2)
VISITOR USE DAYS
BLM-ADMINISTERED LANDS
BY ALTERNATIVE

Activity	(Present) A	15 Year Estimates B	C	D	E
Big Game Hunting	1/ 18,630	18,978	16,682	18,978	18,978
Fishing	2/ 34,700	37,000	33,350	37,100	33,350
Off-Road-Vehicle Use	3/ 5,050	5,650	5,650	5,650	5,650
Hang gliding	200	300	300	300	300
Float Boating	120	200	200	200	200
Snowmobiling	2,700	2,700	2,700	2,700	2,700
Cross-Country Skiing	600	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
Downhill Skiing	4/ 10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000
Camping (Developed Sites)	7,600	9,100	9,950	9,100	9,950

1/ Estimated from Idaho Department of Fish & Game statistics for 1985 season which are attributable to BLM-administered lands.
2/ Estimated from 1975 Idaho Department of Fish & Game statistics.
3/ Includes motorcycle, 4-wheel drive, and all terrain vehicles.
4/ The 1985 Caribou Ski Area data. Closed during 1985-86 season.

Motorized use would continue to occur randomly throughout the PRA and remain at nearly the current level. Use would be relatively light in most areas, with heavier activity occurring on public land near Pocatello and where hunting opportunities are available during the open season. Seasonal ORV closures would continue to be made to protect wintering big game herds and erosive soils near Pocatello, but would have a slight impact on overall ORV recreation use.

New recreation site construction would not be undertaken where potential exists for camping areas, trails, and access sites. BLM would not provide any of the recreation facility needs identified in the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan for the seven counties in the PRA. No mineral withdrawals are proposed for developed recreation sites because the known mineralization of developed sites is minimal. The potential loss of recreation facilities to mining and mineral leasing activities would be considered slight to moderate because of the anticipated low interest in the few developed recreation sites..

No Special Recreation Management Areas would be designated, and emphasis would not be given to managing specific lands for recreation opportunities and uses. A moderate impact to recreation use would result because priority for

funding, management, and staffing would not be given to 48,532 acres of public land. The recreation potential of the lands would not be met and other commodity uses could damage recreation resource values.

Visual resource management classes would establish objectives to protect the existing visual quality of important scenic and recreational areas of public land. Objectives would be applied through standard operating procedures to maintain natural characteristics of WSAs and important scenery in the PRA's recreation and scenic areas. A slight impact to visual resources is anticipated from this Alternative.

Public recreation uses would be eliminated on lands that are disposed of except when transferred to another public agency. The proposed disposals that would eliminate general public use would have only a slight impact on recreation opportunities.

The removal of timber and associated activities such as road building would improve access for recreationists. Generally, improved access would shift recreation opportunities and uses to less primitive forms. Hunting would increase slightly with better vehicle access, as would motorized recreation and woodgathering. Adverse impacts to recreation use levels would be slight because of the small areas that would involve intensive forest management practices.

Cultural resource designations and management of specific sites for their educational, recreational, and interpretive values would have a moderate, positive impact to the recreation use. Visitors would gain an appreciation and awareness of historic and prehistoric values of the public land, thereby enhancing recreation activities near cultural sites.

Management actions to improve stream conditions and fisheries would have a slight effect on fishing opportunities and use. Most streams would remain stable in fish production, and those that would be improved have a limited fisheries.

Conflicts between livestock and recreation visitors would continue in unfenced camping areas and along fishing streams. These conflicts can range from moderate to considerable depending on the particular situation and visitors involved.

There would be no impacts under Alternative A to recreation use from wildlife management actions. Emergency ORV closures would continue on big game winter ranges. These closures have a slight impact on winter recreation use because abundant opportunities exist for snowmobiling outside of wildlife winter ranges.

There would be no impacts under Alternative A to recreation use and visual resources from soils and watershed management actions.

Mining and mineral leasing activities would impact dispersed recreation by disrupting the natural appearance of the landscape and shifting the recreation opportunity setting from the more natural appearing to the developed type. However, since the extent, location, and nature of future operations is not known, the actual impacts cannot be predicted, but is expected to be slight because of the mining activity predicted. In general, mineral leasing impacts to recreation and visual resources would be lessened because of restrictions and stipulations on leasing activities. Streams and other water resources of recreational and scenic value, parks, and other recreation areas would be protected from leasing activities with NSO stipulation. Overall, the impacts to recreation and visual resources from mining and mineral leasing activities would be slight to moderate.

Obtaining and improving public access to public land and marking boundaries would have a considerable beneficial impact on recreational opportunities over the long-term. Public lands previously open to access across private lands are being closed by private landowners. Right-of-way and easement acquisition to approximately 21,400 acres of landlocked public land would ensure access for hunting, fishing, and other activities. Problems with trespass would diminish and visitor management would be improved. Overall, more recreational opportunities would be provided on lands not being used because of access problems.

Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) and Research Natural Area (RNA)

Impact Measures

Adverse and positive impacts to ACECs and RNAs will be defined as slight, moderate, and considerable.

> Slight. Impacts are not considered significant because natural values and resources of the special areas would not be affected. Standard operating procedures and mitigating measures would prevent loss of special values.
>
> Moderate. Impacts would affect natural values and resources of the special areas, but they would not be eliminated or greatly enhanced. Standard operating procedures and mitigating measures would retain the resource values for which the areas would be designated.
>
> Considerable. Impacts would eliminate or greatly enhance the natural values and resources of the special areas. Standard operating procedures could not retain values and losses would occur.

No ACEC would be proposed under this Alternative.

Elk winter range in the Stump Creek area would receive slight to moderate adverse impacts without ACEC designations from harassment by snowmobiles, lost

of forage from livestock grazing, and disturbance from mining and mineral leasing activities. See the Wildlife section in this Alternative for an analysis of impacts.

Watershed values in the Downey Watershed area could receive moderate to considerable impacts without ACEC designation from livestock grazing. Loss of vegetation and soil erosion would continue around developed springs from heavy livestock use resulting in degradation of watershed values.

Botanical and geological features in the Travertine Park area could receive moderate impacts without ACEC designation from ORV use and livestock grazing. ORV use and trampling by livestock could damage Travertine rock formations and rare lichen species.

Special recognition for seven proposed RNAs would not be given. Remnant plant associations of scientific and educational value could be lost if ORV use, livestock grazing, and mining and mineral activities occurred. Slight to moderate impacts from ORV use could result in the Formation Cave, Travertine Park, Dairy Hollow, and Pine Gap areas, while no ORV impacts are anticipated in the remaining three areas. Moderate impacts from livestock grazing are anticipated in the Dairy Hollow, Pine Gap, and Travertine Park areas. The remaining four areas are generally inaccessible to grazing. Mining activity could result in moderate to considerable impacts to Oneida Narrows and Robbers Roost where a high potential for locatable minerals is found. Impacts to the remaining five areas from mining and mineral leasing are not anticipated because of the low potential for mineral occurrence.

Cultural Resource Management

Livestock grazing and ORV use (wheeled-vehicles) would adversely affect 25 documented cultural resource sites. These dispersed activities would have direct and indirect impacts. Livestock and wheeled vehicles can break artifacts and can significantly change spatial and stratigraphic relationships. If hooves or wheels remove vegetation, erosion may occur and further damage archaeological materials and relationships. ORV use would improve access to remote cultural resource sites. Improved access would adversely impact cultural resource. Other resource management activities would produce potential localized, or site-specific, impacts to cultural resources. If standard operating procedures are followed, potential localized adverse effects would be mitigated or eliminated.

Short-term resource management impacts would differ little from long-term impacts. If immediate, short term impacts are not identified and mitigated, 35 documented cultural resource sites could be damaged or destroyed. Short or long-term cultural resource uses would have few significant effects on other resource uses. No-Surface-Occupancy areas and Sensitive Area designations would protect 1,150 acres (refer to Table S.1).

Cultural resources would be managed to preserve a representative sample of the PRA's prehistoric and historic sites. Cultural resources are finite, non-renewable resources. Any cultural resource site condition change is an irretrievable, irreversible resource commitment.

Resource management activity impacts are either localized or dispersed. Localized impacts occur at site-specific, predetermined locations. Examples include range improvement projects, land sales, or mining claim work. Standard Operating Procedure requires a cultural resource inventory before any project or action is authorized.

If these procedures are followed, potential localized impacts would be mitigated. Dispersed impacts include livestock trampling, ORV use, and recreation. Dispersed adverse impacts would be identified, evaluated, and mitigated on a case-by-case basis. If necessary, activity plans would be prepared. Plans would describe present site condition and outline protective needs. Protective recommendations might include monitoring, patrol-surveillance, stabilization, fencing, signing, salvage, and special designations. An activity plan would also allocate cultural resources for specific socio-cultural, scientific, or management uses.

Forest Management

Under Alternative A, 12,659 acres of commercial forest land would be available for restricted forest management. An additional 808 acres would be available with no restrictions. This would result in a potential sustainable allowable cut of approximately 3.8 MMBF/decade. Also, under this Alternative 28,210 acres of woodland would be available for the limited harvest of minor forest products. This would include the sales of posts/poles, firewood and hobby wood.

Harvest practices such as clearcut, shelterwood, and selective cut would influence vegetative cover on approximately 50 acres each year. These harvest activities would benefit forest resources by regenerating the stand, reducing insects and disease through removal of infected trees, and improving growth and production of residual trees.

Forest development practices such as thinning, planting, and use of herbicides would be implemented on available commercial forest lands. The beneficial impact of these silvicultural techniques would be improved stocking levels and growth rates and a decrease in insect and disease problems in these stands.

Grazing would influence forest management activities by endangering the establishment of regeneration. This influence can be partially mitigated through control of season of use and livestock distribution.